How To I.M.P.R.O.V.E.
Your Information Writing

By Paul Evans

http://Nicheology.com

NOTICE: You Do NOT Have the Right to Reprint or Resell this Report!

You Also MAY NOT Give Away,
Sell or Share the Content Herein

Introduction

Let me begin by making what may be a shocking statement to you if you are the type of writer who feels it is of paramount importance to avoid dangling participles and fragmented sentences like they were a charging grizzly bear.

Traditional grammatically-correct writers brace yourself:

Information trumps grammar in this business.

That's why they're called "information" products and not called "grammar" products.

Back up a few sentences.

I wrote "*traditional grammatically-correct writers brace yourself*". Technically, that should have been "*traditional grammatically-correct writers brace yourselves*". Since I used the plural word "*writers*", I should have used the plural word "*yourselves*".

I didn't. And if that bothers you, then you should probably stick to teaching English or find a career as a proofreader. ☺

The point I want to make is this -

Your <u>content</u> is what people are going to buy.

To be sure, you want to be as professional as possible. Use spell-check. Have someone proofread your completed document. Correct any obvious mistakes. Write in such a way that it's easy – even enjoyable – to read.

But don't worry about trying to create a small report your high school English teacher would be proud of. Unless she's a customer, her opinion doesn't count on this one. ☺

I say this because if you're a traditional writer this may be a bit foreign to you. You've been beat over the head with the MLA style 2"X4" so many times you've got splinters sticking out of your head!

Let me sum it up for you in one quick comparison –

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

How To Ace Your Next Interview

is *not* the same as

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Don't write as if it is.

In the coming pages of this report, I'm going to share seven ways to improve your information writing. I'm not going to talk about how to use proper verb tenses, structure sentences or transition from one paragraph to the next.

Instead, I'm going to share some useful tips to help you in the writing process – the experience – so you'll be able to create information products faster, easier and, ultimately, better.

I use the acronym "W.R.I.T.I.N.G." to describe the 7 ways to improve your information writing. Each letter (W – R –I – T – I – N – G) represents a unique way to become a better information product author...

W – WORK in content enhancers.
R – REFER to a starter swipe file.
I – INCORPORATE examples for major points.
T – TRY to answer the infinite question.
I – INSERT two additional sub-points.
N – NEVER forget to be creative.
G – GRANT an interview.

With that said, let's get started. The "w" of w.r.i.t.i.n.g. is...

1. WORK in content enhancers.

There are numerous ways to add extra content to your small report as you are writing it that will both improve the quantity and quality of your information.

⇒ Quantity. By using what I will refer to as "content enhancers" you can quickly create additional pages of information for your small report which will (a) allow you to more quickly write a full report, and (b) increase the perceived value of your report due to its increased size.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

⇒ Quality. More than just a subtle way to add more length to a report, by using these "content enhancers" you'll do just that … enhance the content. In other words, you'll improve it; make it better. Ultimately, you'll have a much higher quality version of your small report upon completion.

Now, before I share nine specific kinds of "content enhancers", let me just quickly give you a definition so we'll both be working with the same thing in mind –

DEFINED: "Content Enhancers"

A content enhancer is any piece of information that clarifies, illustrates, supports or improves the level of education and enjoyment a reader experiences as they consume your small report.

Now, having said that, let's look at 9 different "kinds" of enhancers you should consider using in your next small report -

- **DEFINITIONS**. Look two paragraphs above – what do you see? You see a box with a definition in it. To be precise, it takes up 1/6 of a page and took about 10 seconds to write. The important thing is – it gave me SOMETHING to write about … and it allows me to clarify a concept I'm sharing so you better understand. The point: definitions are a great way to add extra content while further explaining important points in your document.

  Note: If you're creative, you'll find that you do what I often do – make up phrases like "content enhancers" – which is a perfect spot to insert a definition.

- **QUESTIONS**. Another great "enhancer" is to insert questions for your reader to answer as they make their way through certain areas of your content. Think in terms of a "workbook" – how can questions be used to aid the reader in making decisions, examining their lives, reviewing criteria, etc.?

  Example: If you were writing a small report about "weight loss" you might ask questions like: (1) Which of the following emotions most often produce overeating? (2) What dieting "rule" do you find most difficult to follow? (3) Based on the formula I just shared, what changes do you

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

need to make in your eating habits?

- **QUOTES**. Perhaps one of the easiest kinds of "enhancers" to use is a quote. They can be used at anytime during your small report, but are especially appealing at the beginning of a new section or to expand on an important thought. You can drop by Google.com and search for "quotes" or "famous quotes" and you'll find several great directories you can visit to find appropriate quotes.

  Example: In one recent project of mine I was encouraging my readers to take action. I quoted Wayne Gretzky to illustrate the point: "100% of the shots you don't take don't go in". Perfect.

- **EVIDENCE**. You can provide supporting proof for statements that you make to validate your claims. Documented research, statistics, magazine stories, reference materials, archived news, current events, speeches, presentations, trivia, and other similar resources can be referred to as evidence. (Be sure to carefully document the sources from which you obtained your evidence.)

  Example: If you were writing that same small report on "weight loss" you might cite Jorge Cruise's "3-Hour Diet" for suggestions on eating frequency. "In fact, noted fitness guru Jorge Cruise stresses the importance of six meals at equal intervals throughout the day – every 3 hours." (Note: You could even link "3-Hour Diet" to your Amazon.com affiliate link for that book and earn referral commissions!)

- **EXERCISES**. As a writer, what is your ultimate goal? If you're honest, it's probably "to make money". Okay, what is your SECOND ultimate goal? ☺ Again, if you're like me, your secondary goal is probably to help people. In other words, you'd like your customers to actually gain some value from purchasing your small report. Sure, we want to make money – but we also want to make a difference. So, another "enhancer" to include in your small report is one or more "exercises". That is, give your reader instructions on specific things they should do in order to aid them in accomplishing what it is they hope to accomplish after having bought your small report. You might offer brainstorming exercises, internet research tasks, "homework" assignments, etc.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Example: If you're writing a small report on "success", then you might have the reader write down their ten biggest goals in life.

- **STORIES**. If you've read the main manual in this course then you'll find that I tell stories here and there. (If you've read any of my other materials, you'll find this to be true as well.) Why do I do this? There are actually three distinct reasons why I share stories that you'll find relevant to your own small report creation process –

1. EDUCATION. The first and foremost reason is to "educate" the reader. That is, I use stories to better explain or illustrate a concept that I'm sharing. When readers can "see" what you're trying to convey, it goes a long way to engraining the thought into their mind in a useful way. A good story that helps the reader visualize a core concept you're explaining is another great enhancer to sprinkle into your small report.

2. ENTERTAINMENT. One of the things I hear over and over again is how "enjoyable" my writing is. Why is this important? It's important because very few people have the discipline to finish reading something that is boring. And if they don't finish it, they won't use it. I've failed as a writer if that happens. I want to educate the reader AND entertain them – when that happens good things always follow.

3. EXPRESSION. The third reason why I tell stories is because it allows me to express who I am. People get to know me and my beliefs. I can't tell you how many "friends" I've made over the years because we connect on spiritual and relational levels due to our common interests and viewpoints. When you inject your personality into your writing, you'll build a "trust" relationship with your readers which will translate into loyalty. That always pays dividends over time.

- **TIPS**. One of THE "best" kinds of enhancers you can ever use is a "tip". The more you can insert, the better your document will usually be. Tips are the building blocks of information. People love them simply because every tip offers another opportunity to reach a desired result. Here are two great ways to use tips as you write your small report ...

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

1. DIFFERENT WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH.

   One thing you can do is to share tips for multiple methods of accomplishing a specific tasks. If I tell you to "search Google.com for joint venture partners" I might go on to share "5 different ways to find JV partners".

2. DIFFERENT WAYS TO IMPROVE.

   Another idea is to reveal several different suggestions for improving a process. If I tell you to "take a digital photograph for your eBay® auction" I might explain 3-4 ways to improve the pictures (I.E. Use a white background, take at an angle, use side lighting, etc.) And I could even give 3-4 tips for one or more of those tips! (I.E. 3 ways to get better lighting with less glare)

Back up – did you see what I just did? I shared two "tips".

- **VISUAL AIDS**. Sometimes it can be very helpful to insert a diagram such as a chart, drawing, screenshot, graphics, picture, video link or other visual aid in order to thoroughly explain a concept.

  Example: If you were explaining how to use a software program in your small report, it would be helpful to see a screenshot of the software interface to "show" the buttons, menus, etc. that you are referring to in your text explanation.

- **LISTS**. The final "enhancer" that I want to mention to you is a "list". That is a "list with a full description of its entries". Think about this. I could have simply made the following list for this index of "9 content enhancers"...

  - Definitions
  - Questions
  - Quotes
  - Evidence
  - Exercises
  - Stories

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

- Tips
- Diagrams
- Lists

I could have simply listed it just as you see it above with no explanation. And you probably could have figured most of it out. However, by sharing complete details on each of the items contained in this list I've gotten five pages of content and you've got all the information you need (along with numerous examples!) to actually make use of this method of improving your information w.r.i.t.i.n.g.

Whenever possible, create lists of ideas for a concept you're sharing in your small report – and then provide as many details for each entry on the list as possible.

When you "*work in content enhancers*", it will not only make your writing easier to complete, it will make your small report better when it is completed.

That brings us up to our second strategy here, the "r" of w.r.i.t.i.n.g. is...

2. <u>REFER</u> to a starter swipe file. One of the things that you'll find invaluable to you as an information writer is what I have labeled as a "starter swipe file". Just to further prove that I "practice what I preach" about using definitions as "enhancers", here is one ☺...

DEFINED: "Starter Swipe File"

A "starter swipe file" is a collection of ideas to write about written in a single sentence formatted template.

<u>Example</u>: One of the biggest reasons people fail in ___ is ___.

I could use this starter sentence to create paragraphs of content about virtually any topic in the world –

- One of the biggest reasons people fail in marketing is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in dieting is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in reaching goals is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in homeschooling is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in relationships is...

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

These starter sentences allow me to quickly find something to write about anytime I want to build content into a document –

1) At the beginning as I outline it,

2) During the writing process as I struggle for ideas, or

3) At the conclusion of the document when I find portions of the document need more information.

Now, I encourage you to build your own swipe file of sentences that you can use to get you started on writing. You'll find that you have favorites that you refer to in EVERY small report you writing, while there will be others that are just perfect for certain scenarios.

Like I said, I encourage you to **build your own** swipe file. But, because I've been doing this for a long time and have a very good index already created, I'm going to share fifty (yes, that's 50!) of my own starter sentences that you can use as a catalyst for your own writing.

At the conclusion of this list, I'll use several of them as examples just so I know you've got a good grasp of what I mean here.

Note: You'll probably want to print these out on a separate sheet of paper (maybe even laminate them) to refer to anytime you write.

1. One of the biggest reasons people fail in _____ is _____.
2. The greatest lesson I've learned about _____ is _____.
3. The biggest mistake in _____ is _____.
4. Here are the top seven reasons why you should _____.
5. If I had to narrow it down to five steps, they would be...
6. The real secret to _____ is _____.
7. One thing that almost no one knows about _____ is _____.
8. Three of the best web sites for _____ are _____.
9. The absolute worst way to _____ is _____.
10. A secret weapon I use for _____ is _____.
11. Here's why you should never be afraid to _____...
12. Five proven ways to _____ are _____.
13. The best model I've seen for _____ is _____.
14. Two questions to ask when making this decision are_____.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

15. The best example of _____ is _____.
16. Here's what you do when _____ happens...
17. The one thing you've been told that's wrong is _____.
18. New evidence suggests this about _____...
19. The one lesson I wish I had learned years ago is...
20. Here's how to protect yourself from _____...
21. The one question you must ask before _____ is...
22. Three simple exercises to help with _____ are _____...
23. A simple way to organize your _____ is _____.
24. An easy to follow system for _____ is _____.
25. An effective way to speed up your results is _____.
26. Here's a simple 10-step checklist for _____...
27. An often overlooked way to _____ is _____.
28. When you face this problem _____ , here's what to do...
29. Should you _____? Take this quiz...
30. If you're a beginner, then the first thing to do is _____.
31. If you're experienced, then here's an "advanced" tip...
32. Seven warning signs of _____ are...
33. Your three best options for _____ are...
34. A way to get faster results from _____ is _____...
35. It only takes a few minutes to _____.
36. Five things you can do today are...
37. For _____, this works like crazy...
38. Why your _____ won't work.
39. Something every _____ needs to know is _____.
40. The best way I know to _____ is _____.
41. A simple shortcut for _____ is _____.
42. Here's a "rule" about _____ you should BREAK...
43. The biggest waste of time for _____ is _____.
44. If I could only do one thing for _____ it would be _____.
45. You can actually cut _____ by _____.
46. The eleven key ingredients of _____ are...
47. My best advice for _____ is _____.
48. Five ways to improve your existing _____ is _____.
49. A good way to reduce costs is _____.
50. Here is a daily schedule you can refer to for _____...

What an incredible resource this is for you! (It's invaluable to me.) There are so many different "angles" represented in this list (*the fastest way to do something, ways to improve, shortcuts, schedules, questions, exercises, lessons, mistakes, etc.*) that you could mix-n-match and never stop coming up with ideas to write about in your next small report.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Now, just to make certain you understand how to use these templates, let's work through 3 of them together...

> Example: "The biggest mistake in _____ is _____."
>
> If you were writing a small report on homeschooling, you might use this template as "the biggest mistake in homeschooling is choosing the wrong curriculum." You would then go on to explain why that's the biggest mistake and how to avoid it.
>
> Example: "The one question you must ask before _____ is _____."
>
> If you were writing a small report on hiring a ghostwriter, you might use this template as "the one question you must ask before hiring a ghostwriter is 'do you have references'?" You would then write as many paragraphs as needed to explain why references are important, address what the reader should look for in a ghostwriter's references, and so forth.
>
> Example: "Here's how to protect yourself from _____."
>
> If you were writing a small report on "setting up a web site", you might use this template as "here's how you protect yourself from FTC compliance penalties". You would then explain ways to avoid potential problem with unsubstantiated claims, hype, etc.

You begin with one of the template sentences and, then, you simply take as many paragraphs as you need to thoroughly explain things.

It's a writer's secret weapon, a cure for writer's block, and a brilliant way to brainstorm ideas anytime you want all rolled into one.

So, up next we have the first "i" of w.r.i.t.i.n.g., which is...

3. INCORPORATE examples for major points. This is actually a "content enhancer", but it is so important to your small report that I've chosen to give it a letter of its own in the w.r.i.t.i.n.g. acronym.

Doesn't it feel special? ☺

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

> I don't know of anything more useful to the education process of a reader than providing information in such a way that she can actually visualize how to use it in her own pursuits.

Perhaps the best way to do this is to provide "examples" to illustrate your points, especially your **major points**.

At this stage of the very small report you're reading I've already shared 12 examples to clarify statements that I've made.

I recommend that you use <u>at least</u> one example for every major point you introduce in your small report.

Examples do one very important thing that your small report can't do without: they help the reader understand how the information you just shared can be applied in a useful setting.

Examples do more than simply let the reader see what you're talking about (although they do that too!). Examples let the reader see what you're talking about in such a way that they grasp how they can actually do what you're talking about.

And that's what they're looking for.

> <u>Example</u>: (You had to see that coming. ☺) If you're writing that same small report on "weight loss" that we've been referring to, you might make the statement, "try to take extra steps throughout the day." You might then say, "For example: Park as far away from the front door of your office building, grocery store, church, shopping center, etc. as you can to build in extra steps."

Just like that, you have important (if not necessary) content built in to your small report. As with all of the other "enhancers", this allows you the opportunity to write <u>MORE</u> and create a <u>BETTER</u> document.

I assure you, if there is one thing your readers will love you for it is this. Adding examples into your document is something I consider to be mandatory because of their usefulness.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Try to incorporate examples for every major point you share. And don't be afraid to share many more examples than that. I've never heard anyone complain to me before –

"Gosh, I wish you hadn't made it so clear how to use this information. I would have preferred to have no idea what you were talking about." ☺

Give your readers as many examples as you can.

Let's move on. The "t" of w.r.i.t.i.n.g. is...

4. <u>TRY</u> to answer the infinite question. There is a one-word question that simply cannot be completely answered. Regardless of your response to this question, it can always be asked again to whatever you say. That question is, "Why?"

> Imagine you are sitting in your living room with your 5-year-old and you've just told him it's time for him to go to bed. His response?
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because you need to get some sleep."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because it will help you to be refreshed for tomorrow."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because God designed our bodies to recuperate while we are asleep."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because He's God and He knows best."
>
> "Why?"

Have you ever played that game before? ☺

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

So, another way to "improve your information w.r.i.t.i.n.g." is to TRY to answer that question. You can carry out the "why" response and answer as long as you want.

I personally use the "why" approach to writing at two specific times during the writing process that you may want to consider –

1) In times of RESISTANCE. Let's face it, there are times when the words just aren't flowing. Call it "writer's block" or "lack of motivation" or whatever label you want to slap onto it, but the result is the same: we get stuck. So, asking "why" is a great way to lower the bucket into the words well and get the ideas gushing again. When you find yourself not knowing what to write next, ask yourself "why" in response to the last thing you wrote. Answer. And repeat as often as you need.

2) In times of REVISION. When I look back at things that I've written (sometimes after a chapter or segment is completed; sometimes after the entire project is completed), if there are any areas where I think I haven't explained the concept well enough, I'll ask the question "why" which allows me to provide additional information in otherwise fuzzy areas. When you find yourself at a stopping place – a place of revision – take a look for portions of content that may need a deeper explanation and ask yourself "why" to prompt additional ideas.

Now, what I want to do is give you an example in "real time". I'm going to write this as I go. I haven't thought this out at all. And I won't revise it. What you're about to see is a real example of how to use "why" to get ideas flowing.

Example: By questioning "why" you'll be able to improve your information writing.

"Why?"

There are a couple of good reasons –

1. YOU'LL BRAINSTORM IDEAS AS YOU GO.

   You'll almost certainly come up with more things to write about than what you originally outlined. That's what I'm doing right now as I write this. ☺

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

2. YOU'LL EXPLAIN YOURSELF BETTER.

   Because we, as the writers of our small reports, know the information we're sharing intimately, we often forget to "connect the dots" for those who are reading our work. By using the "why" question you'll find that you generally explain things more completely.

"Why?"

Let's face it, it's almost impossible not to provide more details when you begin considering the impact of "why" something is what it is.

"Why?"
You begin thinking about the smaller details that often go unmentioned which are so important to the process being explained. Important steps and instructions are shared which only provide further value to the reader.

"Why?"

That's important to satisfying your customer. Satisfied customer = more sales in the future.

"Why?"

Let me explain it this way: one of the biggest reasons why most people fail in acting on the information they consume (did you notice that I'm using one of the starter sentences from earlier?!) is because the writer of the information left out important details which led the reader to feel as if they were unable to complete the process. So, they give up.

"Why?"

There are a variety of causes for writers leaving out relevant details ranging from haste to poor outlining to assuming the reader knows certain things in advance.

I could go on and on and on like the Energizer® bunny.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Note: Just as a slight variation to this idea you could also repeatedly ask the question "how" if you want to do so. You'll find that you end up explaining a lot more "steps" by asking it.

Now, if I wanted to do so, I could just remove the "why" from the dialogue you just read and include it right here in the very section you're reading and you'd have no idea that I ever asked myself "why". All you'd see as the reader is a logical progression of thoughts that further explain the strategy I've identified in this section.

And that's the point.

When using this strategy, simply remove the "*why*" from your dialogue, polish up your organization as needed, and you've got some great content in place for your readers.

That brings us up to the second "i" of w.r.i.t.i.n.g. ...

5. INSERT two additional sub-points. I call this the "power of 2". The idea is simple –

For every point you have in your outline, insert 2 sub-points;
For each of those 2 sub-points, insert 2 more sub-points;
Repeat this process until you have ample ideas to write about.

This is a great way to break things down into bite-sized chunks which *(a) provides your reader with every major detail they'll need, and (b) provides you with an easy-to-complete, fill-in-the-blanks outline.*

When you continue adding (at least) two sub-points to each of your existing points/sub-points, you'll soon brainstorm and arrange almost everything you can think of related to the topic.

Now, at first glance this may not seem like it's that important. Fair enough. Let me walk you through an example to illustrate how effective this can be.

And just to prove to you that it really works for ANY topic you might pull out of your hat, I'm going to use this simple technique on one of the most absurd topics you can think of – "***How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel***."

Stay with me here. ☺

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Here's my original outline for the above referenced small report …

How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel

Step 1: Choose A Pizza Place To Order From
Step 2: Choose What Kind Of Pizza To Order
Step 3: Order Chosen Pizza From The Chosen Pizza Place

Now, let's take that first step and add 2 sub-points...

How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel

Step 1: Choose A Pizza Place To Order From

- 1.1 See What's Available In Your Area
- 1.2 Decide Your Favorite Among Those Available

This time, let's take step 1 and sub-point 1.1 and add 2 sub-points...

How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel

Step 1: Choose A Pizza Place To Order From

- 1.1 See What's Available In Your Area
  - 1.1.1 Look in the Yellow Pages
  - 1.1.2 Look in the Hotel Directory

Let's don't stop now! We're gonna take sub-point 1.1.1 and above and add 2 more sub-points to the mix...

How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel

Step 1: Choose A Pizza Place To Order From

- 1.1 See What's Available In Your Area
  - 1.1.1 Look in the Yellow Pages
    - 1.1.1.1 Search under "Pizza"
    - 1.1.1.2 Search for coupons at the back

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

I could keep going forever! ☺ One more time just for good measure. We'll add a couple more sub-points just below 1.1.1.1. ...

How To Order A Pizza While Staying In A Hotel

Step 1: Choose A Pizza Place To Order From

- 1.1 See What's Available In Your Area
  - 1.1.1 Look in the Yellow Pages
    - 1.1.1.1 Search under "Pizza"
      - 1.1.1.1.1 Look for local "flavors"
      - 1.1.1.1.2 Look for major chains

You can continue to add 2 more sub-points until you've adequately brainstormed and covered a satisfactory number of ideas.

Note: It doesn't have to be "2" sub-points. It can be 3, 4, 5, etc. – there isn't a set number, nor is it necessary to uniformly add the same number of sub-points.

Do you see how powerful this can be?

When you consider all the different KINDS of "sub-points" you can insert into your small report, it can be a tremendous strategy...

⇒ Tips
⇒ Strategies
⇒ Questions
⇒ Ideas
⇒ Options
⇒ Reasons
⇒ Resources
⇒ Notes
⇒ Examples
⇒ Exercises
⇒ Case Studies
⇒ Illustrations
⇒ Memos
⇒ Quotes
⇒ Research

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

⇒ Reflections
⇒ Rules
⇒ Guidelines
⇒ Tactics
⇒ Principles

You can add these two additional sub-points in at a variety of stages in the development process of your small report -

1) As you outline your small report. As you create your outline, insert two additional sub-points in as many times as you feel necessary to get enough ideas to write about.

2) As you write your small report. This is actually when I usually do it – as I am actually creating content. I'll get to areas where I feel like I need some additional information and I just add two more sub-points in until I feel I've adequately covered the topic.

3) As you review your small report. You can always add them in to sparse areas as you are looking back at your semi-completed document.

Again, it's a really good way to "improve your information w.r.i.t.i.n.g."

Which reminds me – it's time to move on to the "n" of our acronym...

6. NEVER forget to be creative. Writing should be an enjoyable experience for both you and the person reading your finished work.

If it's a task or a chore, then **you're not doing it correctly**. Writing should be adventurous, dare I say … FUN!

If this is just another gig that pays the bills, then it's time to re-evaluate things a bit. I want you to remember that "improving" your writing begins and ends with ***getting the best out of you***.

For most of us, we give our best to things we enjoy.

Listen, have fun with your small report. *Never forget to be creative*. Sure, you'll be writing a lot of "*technical*" information (I.E. "How to do XYZ" or "50 ways to XYZ", etc.) but that doesn't mean it has to sound like a user manual for a digital camera.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Let me quickly share five ways to inject a little creativity into your writing...

1. **ACRONYMS**. I love to use "acronyms". Look no further to the very report that you're reading for proof. I use the acronym "w.r.i.t.i.n.g." to share 7 ways to improve your information writing. In Sunday School I once used the acronym "b.a.r.r.i.e.r.s." to describe 8 different kinds of roadblocks we face in pursuing Godly goals. Don't overdo it where everything is an acronym, but don't be afraid to inject a creatively organized word into your outlining and presentation.

   Come up with a
   Really helpful and
   Entertaining way to
   Arrange your
   Thoughts with
   Insight for a
   Valuable
   Experience for your reader.

2. **ADJECTIVES**. That is, make up words and phrases to describe a concept that you're talking about. Remember back to the "w" of this report that you're reading: what did I call the different kinds of ways you can add content to your small report to make it better? I called them "content enhancers". I made that phrase up. In one of my other information product courses I listed several places to find ideas for your own products – I called these places "idea hangouts". Listen, this is YOUR small report … you make the rules, which means you can make up words and phrases if you want to!

3. **ANALOGIES**. Again, let me refer back to something I did earlier in this report. I wrote, and I quote, "*I say this because if you're a traditional writer this may be a bit foreign to you. You've been beat over the head with the MLA style 2"X4" so many times you've got splinters sticking out of your head!"* That's an analogy – I'm comparing repeated instruction in style with getting head over the head with a piece of lumber. (Now that's creative! ☺)

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

Don't be afraid to mix in creative comparisons to hammer home a point (I chose "hammer" to keep with my lumber analogy. ☺).

4. **ATTITUDE**. Reflect your own personality (as long as you're likeable, of course…if you're a jerk in real life, you should probably hide behind a mask when you're writing ☺) in your small report. Be witty – sincere – humorous – parental – loving – sarcastic – motivational. Let people get to know you in your style of writing. And if you don't like who you are in real life (you know, if you really are a jerk) then pretend to be someone likeable in your writing. Hint: You can pick me as a model if you want. See how funny I am. ☺

5. **ALLITERATION**. Technically, I suppose if you want to be that way, technically "alliteration" is two or more words of the same word group beginning with the same letter. (I.E. apt alliteration's artful aid) But, in keeping with the "this is my small report and I'll make my own rules" mantra, I'm going to stretch that definition just a bit to include grouping bulleted words together with the same first letter. Look at what you've just read. For the five "ways" to be creative in our writing I've used the following words: acronyms, adjectives, analogies, attitude and alliteration. Each of these words begin with the letter "a". They didn't just fall into place like that. I chose these specific words because I wanted to alliterate. Whenever possible (don't slave hours over this!) use words that begin with the same letter when you outline sections of your small report. It's just another reflection of your creative side. (Note: I use Thesaurus.com to find words that begin with the same letter by searching for a word with the meaning I want and then looking at their listing of synonyms to see if one is available with the beginning letter I want.)

So that's another way to improve your information "w.r.i.t.i.n.g." One more to go. Last up is the "g" of our acronym...

7. <u>GRANT</u> an interview. Last, but certainly not least, is the idea of having someone else interview you to use as part of your small report.

This one doesn't require a lot of explanation –

1. Choose your topic for the interview. (It can even be a "sub-topic" from one of your points)

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

2. Choose a handful of starter questions. (These should be generalized questions about the topic of the interview to be used as a foundation for the interview)

3. Choose a person to interview you. (Provide them with the starter questions and ask them to determine 10-15 more questions they'd like to ask)

4. Choose a time and place to conduct the interview. (It can be a telephone call, a chat room, in person or even via email.)

Conduct the interview. It's that simple.

Now, there's a very good reason why I think this is a great way to "improve your information w.r.i.t.i.n.g." and here it is –

When someone interviews you, they'll likely think of questions that you've never even considered.

This is especially true of "follow-up" questions. (I.E. You answer a question and they ask another question for clarification or for an example, etc.)

That's the mother lode of thinking outside the box – when someone asks you something ***related*** to an idea you're sharing that launches into an entirely different thought process.

Those kinds of discussions can be a gold mine of useful information. And they usually start innocently when someone asks you a simple question that comes to THEIR mind during an interview that you've not even thought about.

Have someone interview YOU and see where it leads. You'll surely glean additional useful information to include in your small report that otherwise wouldn't have been discovered.

Closing Thoughts

If you work the seven strategies we've examined here into your next small report (and any other kind of "information writing"), you should find that you have more ideas to write about, it's easier to write about those ideas and, ultimately, you have a better completed product when you're finished.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.

I hope you've found this report useful and informative. It's been my privilege to share with you and I trust that it will be more than just words in a document. I trust it will be information you can ***act on*** … that it truly does make a difference in your writing and in your life.

After you've put this into practice and have your small report completed, I'd love to hear from you. It would be my honor to rejoice over your accomplishment with you.

© Copyright. All rights reserved.